AGRICULTURAL ANALYSIS GUIDELINES

Guidelines should appropriately address the information desired, not detail the means to obtaining that information. They are intended to provide consistency in agricultural technical studies and offer suggested formats to contain basic information.

I. GOALS

Goals of the agricultural analysis and indirectly, these guidelines are as follows:

A. To promote an efficient presentation of information for adequate and effective environmental review in meeting the requirements of CEQA.

B. To increase the efficiency of the environmental review process, to prevent unnecessary time delays, to standardize agricultural technical studies, and to define the minimum information necessary.

C. To provide the project applicant sufficient information in a timely manner to permit appropriate planning decisions prior to finalizing project designs.

D. To identify significant agricultural resources and operations.

E. To ensure that information collected in past projects can have some utility in evaluating future projects in similar circumstances.

These guidelines are meant to guide the content of agricultural technical studies and will be used to determine acceptability for use in environmental documents and extended initial studies.

II. REPORT FORMAT AND CONTENT

The following format is suggested for an agricultural analysis technical study.

A. Cover Page
Include a signature block of the principal investigators and the name of the project, including permit number(s).

B. Summary of Findings
Briefly state the results of the analysis and the impacts anticipated with any mitigation measures to reduce or eliminate potentially significant impacts.

C. Introduction

Briefly describe the proposed project, its size and location (including a vicinity a map of appropriate scale to show nearby roadways and other significant features). Briefly discuss any relevant agricultural highlights of the property and vicinity.

D. Methods and Survey Limitations

Include a description of methods used to complete the survey for the agricultural technical studies, such as survey techniques used; dates, times, and conditions during any surveys; limitations and rationale for the surveys; and a map, where appropriate, showing location of transects, sample points and the areas actually visited.

E. Results

Include a description of the agricultural resources and/or operations on the property and in the vicinity of the project site. Include appropriate maps showing all on-site and surrounding land uses, with appropriate references to specific agricultural use types (i.e. oranges, grapefruits, avocados, dairy, horse ranching etc.). Also, include maps showing existing zoning, agricultural preserves, lands under Williamson Act contracts, and maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency (i.e. areas mapped as Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, Unique Farmland, Farmland of Local Importance, Other Lands) as appropriate.

1. Mapping of Information. All maps submitted with the agricultural analysis must be of a scale sufficient to show the location of the resources identified and their relationship to aspects of the project likely to adversely affect resources. Elevations and north direction must be indicated on all maps.

2. Land Use. Completely describe the project area. Include a description of current and planned land use designations and zoning. Address any agricultural land use goals, policies or recommendations contained in the County of San Diego General Plan that the project is subject to and discuss the project's conformance with such goals, policies or recommendations of the General Plan. Describe the project's proximity to surrounding agricultural uses and address the issue of land use compatibility. Discuss the compatibility of proposed non-agricultural uses with surrounding agricultural uses. Specifically, discuss the compatibility of non-agricultural uses with existing agricultural conditions in the vicinity including, but not limited to agricultural noise production from seasonal harvesting, production, and workers; agricultural chemical and pesticide application; active agricultural resources and/or operations; dust; odors; trespassing; traffic; and any other identified hazard or unusual circumstance.

3. Important Farmland Map Category. Define which Important Farmland Map Category the project lies within and discuss the importance of the category. Also discuss if the project proposes to convert Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance and Unique Farmland to a non-agricultural use. For areas not identified by an Important Farmland Map Category label as Other Land.
4. Williamson Act Contract. Identify whether the project site or lands in the vicinity of the project are a part of an existing Williamson Act contract. If so, discuss how development will affect lands covered by the Williamson Act contract and discuss any potential conflicts that may result from the project.

5. Agricultural Preserve. Identify whether the project site or lands in the vicinity of the project are a part of an existing agricultural preserve. If so, discuss how development will affect lands within the agricultural preserve and discuss any potential conflicts that may result from the project.

6. Cropping History and Suitability. Describe the cropping history in the vicinity. Discuss the suitability of for crops such as grain, orchard, vineyard, pasture, range, etc., in the vicinity.

7. Soils. Identify and discuss potential for prime agricultural and non-prime agricultural soils to occur on-site. Describe the importance of these soils in the County of San Diego.

8. Water. Discuss the availability of water in the project vicinity.

9. Climate. Discuss the climate in the project area and its importance to agricultural uses in the vicinity.

F. Anticipated Project Impacts

1. Identify and evaluate direct impacts that would result from project implementation, such as conversion of agricultural lands and farmland to a non-agricultural use.

2. Identify and evaluate indirect impacts on-site and off-site as a result of project implementation such as, interface or fringe impacts to agricultural lands, soils, water quality, etc.

3. Indicate the percentage (or acreage) of agricultural lands, farmland, agricultural preserves, Williamson Act contract lands, and Important Farmland Map Categories to be converted to a non-agricultural use by the proposed development. Also, define, if possible, the local, regional and Countywide significance of any losses.

4. Discuss cumulative agricultural impacts including known or perceived losses for the local area, region and County.

5. Discuss the impacts that project will have on surrounding agricultural resources and/or operations.

6. The California Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment (LESA) Model may be used to assist in the assessment of impacts on agriculture and farmland.

G. Mitigation Measures

Discuss in detail any feasible mitigation measures that would reduce anticipated significant impacts to levels below significance, and where appropriate discuss critical design elements of the project. If agricultural open space easements or agricultural buffers are proposed as a part of the project they should be shown on a copy of the project map or plot plan. Feasibility of the mitigating actions should also be discussed.

H. Certification

Provide names and qualifications of those participating in the fieldwork and in the report preparation.

I. Qualifications

Persons preparing or responsible for agricultural technical studies should have the following qualifications.

1. Sufficient formal educational background in appropriate areas of study to understand the importance of agricultural land uses.

2. Sufficient experience in agricultural resource evaluation and predicting quantifying environmental impacts.